Scott M. Grace S.B.N. 236621

Luftman, Heck & Associates, LLP 2 1958 Sunset Cliffs Boulevard 3 San Diego, CA 92107 sgrace@lawlh.com 4 Phone: 619-346-4600 5 Fax: 619-923-3661 6 Attorney for Plaintiff 7 8 9 IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT 10 FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA Case No.: '14CV2362 LAB JMA FERNANDA CUNHA, 11 Plaintiff, 12 COMPLAINT 13 VS. CREDIT CONTROL, LLC, DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL 14 15 Defendant. 16 17 18 19 20 21 **INTRODUCTION** 22 23 1. This is an action for actual damages, statutory damages, attorney fees and 24 costs brought by an individual consumer, FERNANDA CUNHA, (hereinafter Plaintiff) for CREDIT CONTROL, LLC, hereinafter (CREDIT CONTROL) violations of the 25 Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, 15 U.S.C. §1692, et seq. (hereinafter "FDCPA"), 26 which prohibits debt collectors from engaging in abusive, deceptive and unfair 27 practices. 28

COMPLAINT

- 2. Plaintiff makes these allegations on information and belief, with the exception of those allegations that pertain to a plaintiff, or to plaintiff's counsel, which Plaintiff alleges on personal knowledge.
- 3. While many violations are described below with specificity, this Complaint alleges violations of the statutes cited in their entirety.

#### **JURISDICTION AND VENUE**

- 4. This action arises out of Defendant's repeated violations of the FDCPA under 15 U.S.C. §1692, *et seq*.
  - 5. Jurisdiction arises pursuant to 15 U.S.C. §1692(k).
  - 6. Venue is proper in this Court pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §1391.

#### THE PARTIES

- 7. Plaintiff is a natural person residing in San Diego, California.
- 8. Plaintiff is a "consumer" within the meaning of 15 U.S.C. §1692a(3) of the FDCPA in that she is a natural person purportedly obligated to pay a credit card debt owed to Credit Control (hereinafter "Debt").
- 9. At all times relevant herein, Defendant Credit Control was a company engaged, by use of the mails and/or telephone in the business of collecting debts, as defined by 15 U.S.C. §1692a(5).
- 10. Credit Control regularly attempts to collect debts alleged to be due another and is therefore a debt collector within the meaning of 15 U.S.C. §1692a(6). Since Credit Control does business in the state of California, and committed the acts that form the basis for this suit in the state of California, this Court has personal jurisdiction over Credit Control for purposes of this action.

#### **FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS**

- 11. At all times herein, Defendant Credit Control was attempting to collect, from Plaintiff, a debt as defined by 15 U.S.C. §1692a(5).
- 12. Prior to January 8, 2014, Plaintiff allegedly became delinquent in the payment owed on the alleged debt. Plaintiff currently neither admits nor denies that the alleged debt is valid.
- 13. Prior to January 8, 2014, the alleged debt was assigned, placed, or otherwise transferred to Defendant Credit Control for collection.
- 14. On or about January 8, 2014, Plaintiff hired the Law Firm of Luftman, Heck & Associates, LLP (hereinafter "Luftman, Heck & Associates") to represent her with respect to negotiating a settlement of the alleged Debt.
- 15. On January 8, 2014, Luftman, Heck & Associates sent a "Power of Attorney" notice (Exhibit 1) to Defendant Credit Control via email on behalf of Plaintiff.
- 16. Despite having received the "Power of Attorney" on behalf of Plaintiff, Defendant Credit Control continued to attempt to collect the alleged debt from Plaintiff, and sent a collection letter dated February 14, 2014 to Plaintiff at her residence. (Exhibit 2)
- 17. The statements in Exhibit 2 were communications within the meaning of 15 U.S.C. §1692a(2).
- 18. On February 27, 2014, Luftman, Heck & Associates contacted Defendant Credit Control via email regarding the collection letter (Exhibit 2) which was sent to Plaintiff, and re-submitted the "Power of Attorney" (Exhibit 1) to Defendant Credit Control. This was further confirmation to Defendant Credit Control that Plaintiff was represented by counsel.
- 19. Despite having received the "Power of Attorney" on two occasions on behalf of Plaintiff, Defendant Credit Control continued to attempt to collect the alleged

debt from Plaintiff, and sent another collection letter dated March 24, 2014 to Plaintiff at her residence (Exhibit 3).

- 20. The statements in Exhibit 3 were communications within the meaning of 15 U.S.C. §1692a(2).
- 21. Despite having received the "Power of Attorney" on at least two occasions on behalf of Plaintiff, Defendant Credit Control continued to attempt to collect the alleged debt from Plaintiff, and sent another collection letter dated April 7, 2014 to Plaintiff at her residence (Exhibit 4).
- 22. The statements in Exhibit 4 were communications within the meaning of 15 U.S.C. §1692a(2).
- 23. Despite having received the "Power of Attorney" on at least two occasions on behalf of Plaintiff, Defendant Credit Control continued to attempt to collect the alleged debt from Plaintiff, and sent another collection letter dated May 9, 2014 to Plaintiff at her residence (Exhibit 5).
- 24. The statements in Exhibit 5 were communications within the meaning of 15 U.S.C. §1692a(2).
- 25. At no time had the defendant received permission from the Law Firm of Luftman, Heck & Associates to contact Plaintiff.
- 26. Defendant Credit Control knew and could readily ascertain the address of Plaintiff's counsel, and in fact did contact Plaintiff's counsel during this period of time.
- 27. Defendant knew or could readily ascertain that Plaintiff's counsel had not consented to a direct communication with Plaintiff.
- 28. Through the above conduct, Defendant Credit Control repeatedly communicated with Plaintiff after Defendant knew Plaintiff to be represented by an attorney. Consequently, Defendant Credit Control violated 15 U.S.C. §1692c(a)(2).
- 29. Through the above conduct, Defendant Credit Control has engaged in conduct the natural consequence of which is to harass, oppress, or abuse any person in

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connection with the alleged debt. Consequently, Defendant Credit Control violated 15 U.S.C. §1692d.

## CLAIM FOR RELEIF

#### (Violations of the FDCPA)

- 30. Plaintiff repeats, re-alleges, and incorporates by reference all the allegations contained in the paragraphs above.
- 31. Defendant violated the FDCPA. The violations include, but are not limited to, the following:
  - (1) communicating with the consumer by means of the above mentioned notices after knowing she was represented by counsel in violation of 15 U.S.C. §1692c(a)(2);
  - (2) engaged in conduct the natural consequence of which is to harass, oppress, or abuse any person in connection with the collection of the alleged debt in violation of 15 U.S.C. §1692d.
- 32. As a result of the Defendant's actions, Plaintiff is entitled to actual damages, statutory damages, attorney's fees and costs of this action.

### **PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff prays that judgment be entered against Defendant Credit Control, and for Plaintiff, and prays for the following relief:

- 1. An award of actual damages against Defendant Credit Control pursuant to 15 U.S.C. §1692k(a)(1);
- 2. An award of statutory damages of \$1,000.00 against Defendant Credit Control pursuant to 15 U.S.C. §1692k(a)(2)(A);
- 3. An award of costs of litigation and reasonable attorney's fees against Defendant Credit Control, pursuant to 15 U.S.C. §1692k(a)(3);
  - 4. Such other and further relief this court may deem just and proper.

TRIAL BY JURY 33. Pursuant to the seventh amendment to the Constitution of the United States of America, Plaintiff is entitled to, and hereby demands, a trial by jury. Luftman, Heck and Associates Dated: October 6, 2014 By s/ Scott M. Grace Attorney for Plaintiff, E-mail: sgrace@lawlh.com 

The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet. (SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON NEXT PAGE OF THIS FORM.)

purpose of initiating the civil do	ocket sheet. (SEE INSTRUC	TIONS ON NEXT PAGE O	F THIS FO	PRM.)					
I. (a) PLAINTIFFS				DEFENDANTS					
Fernanda Cunha				Credit Control, LLC					
(c) Attorneys (Firm Name, Address, and Telephone Number) Scott M. Grace, Luftman, Heck & Associates, LLP 1958 Sunset Cliffs Boulevard, San Diego, CA 92107 (619) 346-4611				County of Residence of First Listed Defendant  (IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES ONLY)  NOTE: IN LAND CONDEMNATION CASES, USE THE LOCATION OF THE TRACT OF LAND INVOLVED.  Attorneys (If Known)  14CV2362 LAB JMA					
II. BASIS OF JURISDI	CTION (Place an "X" in O	ne Box Only)	III. CI	TIZENSHIP OF PI	RINCIPA	AL PARTIES	(Place an "X" in	One Box fo	or Plaintiff
☐ 1 U.S. Government Plaintiff	■ 3 Federal Question (U.S. Government)	Not a Party)		(For Diversity Cases Only) PT en of This State		Incorporated or Pr of Business In T		or Defenda PTF 4	<i>nnt)</i> <b>DEF</b> □ 4
☐ 2 U.S. Government Defendant	☐ 4 Diversity (Indicate Citizensh	ip of Parties in Item III)	Citize	en of Another State	2 🗖 2	Incorporated and I of Business In		<b>5</b>	□ 5
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VII. REQUESTED IN COMPLAINT:	CHECK IF THIS UNDER RULE 2	IS A <b>CLASS ACTION</b> 3, F.R.Cv.P.		EMAND \$ 75,000.00		CHECK YES only URY DEMAND:		complain	nt:
VIII. RELATED CASI IF ANY	(See instructions):	JUDGE			DOCKI	ET NUMBER			
DATE 10/06/2014 FOR OFFICE USE ONLY		signature of at /s/ Scott M. Gra		OF RECORD					
	MOUNT	APPLYING IFP		JUDGE		MAG. JUI	DGE		

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# Power of Attorney

I, Fernanda Cunha, hereby appoint Scott Grace, Esq., paralegals, and staff employed by Luftman, Heck & Associates, LLP to perform each and every act that may be necessary or convenient in settling outstanding debts.

To Wit: Review debts, request credit information, communicate with my creditors to negotiate settlement of outstanding obligations, change account addresses, phone numbers, or any other account information, negotiate repayment terms, and forward payments pursuant to agreements.

Executed this <u>D8</u> day of <u>SANUARY</u>, in the year of 2014.

Fernanda Cunha

Fernanda S Cumha

Exhibit 1

#### Case 3:14-cv-02362-LAB-JMA Document 1 Filed 10/06/14 PageID.10 Page 10 of 13 Credit Control, LLC

PO Box 31179 Tampa FL 33631-3179 ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED PO Box 31179 • Tampa, FL 33631 Office Hours Mon-Thur 8am to 8pm Friday 8am to 5pm • Saturday 9am to 5pm (800) 670-9944

February 14, 2014

Account #:4996679 Balance: \$14112.82

604 244464651

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Fernanda Cunna 1829 Capistrano St San Diego CA 92106-1705

Credit Control, LLC
PO Box 31179
Tampa FL 33631-3179

\*\*\*Detach Upper Portion and Return with Payment\*\*\*

Collection Agency For: CITIBANK N.A.

Account #: 4996679 Balance: \$14112.82

#### 

Please be advised Credit Control LLC. has been authorized to offer a settlement on the above referenced Sears Gold Mastercard account.

Funds in the amount of \$7056.41 must be received in our office no later than February 25, 2014.

You may issue payment over the phone via check or debit card free of charge.

If you are unable to pay the settlement amount, please contact our office to discuss a payment arrangement on the balance.

"We are not obligated to renew this offer."

Whenever \$600.00 or more in principal of a debt is discharged as a result of settling a debt for less than the balance owing, the creditor may be required to report the amount of the debt discharged to the Internal Revenue Service on a 1099C form, a copy of which would be mailed to you by the creditor. If you are uncertain of the legal or tax consequences, we encourage you to consult your legal or tax advisor.

The state Rosenthal Fair Debt Collection Practices Act and the federal Fair Debt Collection Practices Act require that, except under unusual circumstances, collectors may not contact you before 8 a.m. or after 9 p.m. They must not harass you by using threats of violence or arrest or by using obscene language. Collectors may not use false or misleading statements or call you at work if they know or have reason to know that you may not receive personal calls at work. For the most part, collectors may not tell another person, other than your attorney or spouse, about your debt. Collectors may contact another person to confirm your location or enforce a judgment. For more information about debt collection activities, you may contact the Federal Trade Commission at 1-877-FTC-HELP or <a href="https://www.ftc.gov">www.ftc.gov</a>. As required by law, you are hereby notified that a negative credit record may be submitted to a credit reporting agency if you fail to fulfill the terms of your credit obligations.

1980NCRCT01604

### Case 3:14-cv-02362-LAB-JMA Document 1 Filed 10/06/24 and Document

PO Box 31179 Tampa FL 33631-3179 ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

March 24, 2014

PO Box 31179 • Tampa, FL 33631 Office Hours Mon-Thur 8am to 8pm Friday 8am to 5pm • Saturday 9am to 5pm (800) 670-9944

> Account #:4996679 Balance: \$14112.82

604 272985801

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Fernanda Cunna 1829 Capistrano St San Diego CA 92106-1705

Credit Control, LLC PO Box 31179 Tampa FL 33631-3179

\*\*\*Detach Upper Portion and Return with Payment\*\*\*

Collection Agency For: CITIBANK N.A.

Account #:

4996679

Balance:

\$14112.82

#### 

Please be advised Credit Control LLC. has been authorized to offer a settlement on the above referenced Sears Gold Mastercard account.

Funds in the amount of \$7056.41 must be received in our office no later than March 31 2014.

You may issue payment over the phone via check or debit card free of charge.

If you are unable to pay the settlement amount, please contact our office to discuss a payment arrangement on the balance.

"We are not obligated to renew this offer."

Whenever \$600.00 or more in principal of a debt is discharged as a result of settling a debt for less than the balance owing, the creditor may be required to report the amount of the debt discharged to the Internal Revenue Service on a 1099C form, a copy of which would be mailed to you by the creditor. If you are uncertain of the legal or tax consequences, we encourage you to consult your legal or tax advisor.

The state Rosenthal Fair Debt Collection Practices Act and the federal Fair Debt Collection Practices Act require that, except under unusual circumstances, collectors may not contact you before 8 a.m. or after 9 p.m. They must not harass you by using threats of violence or arrest or by using obscene language. Collectors may not use false or misleading statements or call you at work if they know or have reason to know that you may not receive personal calls at work. For the most part, collectors may not tell another person , other than your attorney or spouse, about your debt. Collectors may contact another person to confirm your location or enforce a judgment. For more information about debt collection activities, you may contact the Federal Trade Commission at 1-877-FTC-HELP or <a href="www.ftc.gov">www.ftc.gov</a>. As required by law, you are hereby notified that a negative credit record may be submitted to a credit reporting agency if you fail to fulfill the terms of your credit obligations.

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Case 3:14-cv-02362-LAB-JMA Document 1 Filed 10/06/Credit Control, Lage 12 of 13

PO Box 31179 Tampa FL 33631-3179 ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED PO Box 31179 • Tampa, FL 33631 Office Hours Mon-Thur 8am to 8pm Friday 8am to 5pm • Saturday 9am to 5pm (800) 670-9944

April 7, 2014

Account #:4996679 Balance: \$14112.82

604 282463099

Fernanda Cunna 1829 Capistrano St San Diego CA 92106-1705

Credit Control, LLC PO Box 31179 Tampa FL 33631-3179

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\*\*\*Detach Upper Portion and Return with Payment\*\*\*

Collection Agency For: CITIBANK N.A.

Account #: 4996679 Balance: \$14112.82

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Please be advised Credit Control LLC. has been authorized to offer a settlement on the above referenced Sears Gold Mastercard account.

Funds in the amount of \$7056.41 must be received in our office no later than April 18 2014.

You may issue payment over the phone via check or debit card free of charge.

If you are unable to pay the settlement amount, please contact our office to discuss a payment arrangement on the balance.

"We are not obligated to renew this offer."

Whenever \$600.00 or more in principal of a debt is discharged as a result of settling a debt for less than the balance owing, the creditor may be required to report the amount of the debt discharged to the Internal Revenue Service on a 1099C form, a copy of which would be mailed to you by the creditor. If you are uncertain of the legal or tax consequences, we encourage you to consult your legal or tax advisor.

The state Rosenthal Fair Debt Collection Practices Act and the federal Fair Debt Collection Practices Act require that, except under unusual circumstances, collectors may not contact you before 8 a.m. or after 9 p.m. They must not harass you by using threats of violence or arrest or by using obscene language. Collectors may not use false or misleading statements or call you at work if they know or have reason to know that you may not receive personal calls at work. For the most part, collectors may not tell another person, other than your attorney or spouse, about your debt. Collectors may contact another person to confirm your location or enforce a judgment. For more information about debt collection activities, you may contact the Federal Trade Commission at 1-877-FTC-HELP or <a href="www.ftc.gov">www.ftc.gov</a>. As required by law, you are hereby notified that a negative credit record may be submitted to a credit reporting agency if you fail to fulfill the terms of your credit obligations.

1980NCRCT01604

## CREDITCONTROL

Date:

05/09/2014

Name:

CUNNA FERNANDA 1829 CAPISTRANO ST SAN DIEGO,CA 921061705

Re:

**SEARS GOLD MASTERCARD** 

Account:

4996679/XXXXXX9361

Balance:

\$ 14,112.82

Settlement Offer: \$ 3,528.21

This is to advise that Credit Control, LLC., as authorized agent for CITIBANK has agreed to accept the settlement amount on the above noted account providing we are in receipt of the payment no later than 05/16/14.

#### If your payment is returned for any reason this offer is null and void.

Unless you notify this office within 30 days after receiving this notice that you dispute the validity of this debt or any portion thereof, this office will assume this debt is valid. If you notify this office in writing within 30 days after receiving this notice, this office will: obtain verification of the debt or obtain a copy of a judgment and mail you a copy of such judgment or verification. If you request this office in writing within 30 days after receiving this notice, this office will provide you with the name and address of the original creditor, if different from the current creditor.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to contact this office at 1-888-401-9026. This information is from a debt collector.

Whenever \$600.00 or more in principal of a debt is discharged as a result of settling a debt for less than the balance owing, the creditor may be required to report the amount of the debt discharged to the Internal Revenue Service on a 1099C form, a copy of which would be mailed to you by the creditor. If you are uncertain of the legal or tax consequences, we encourage you to consult your legal or tax advisor. The state Rosenthal Fair Debt Collection Practices Act and the federal Fair Debt Collection Practices Act require that, except under unusual circumstances, collectors may not contact you before 8 a.m. or after 9 p.m. They may not harass you by using threats of violence or arrest or by using obscene language. Collectors may not use false or misleading statements or call you at work if they know or have reason to know that you may not receive personal calls at work. For the most part, collectors may not tell another person, other than your attorney or spouse, about your debt. Collectors may contact another person to confirm your location or enforce a judgment. For more information about debt collection activities, you may contact the Federal Trade Commission at 1-877-FTC-HELP or <a href="https://www.ftc.gov">www.ftc.gov</a>. As required by law, you are hereby notified that a negative credit agency report reflecting on your credit record may be submitted to a credit reporting agency if you fail to fulfill the terms of your credit obligations. But we will not submit a negative credit report to a credit reporting agency about this credit obligation until the expiration of the time period described in the notice on the front of this letter.

THIS IS AN ATTEMPT TO COLLECT A DEBT BY A DEBT COLLECTOR: ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE.

Regards, Hays Roden Manager